

# The Workplace

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## A Fact Sheet

### Highlights

An effective resume **must** be:

1. *Brief*— . . . *not more than one to two pages.*
2. *Informative*— *include your qualifications and an insight into your future career plans*
3. *Accurate*—*no typographical or grammatical errors.*
4. *Attractive*—*make certain resume is easy to read and follow.*
5. *Well organized*—*arrange information in a logical format.*

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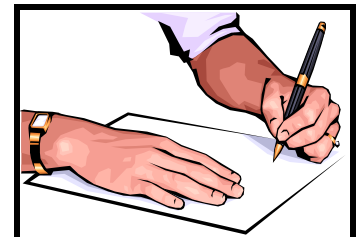
## Job Search 101: Writing an Effective Resume

You will almost always need a resume to conduct an effective job search regardless of which approach is used to find employment. Before beginning to develop a resume, it is very important to fully understand the *purpose* of a resume which is to get an interview with the company. Your resume is a vehicle by which you create enough interest that the potential employer will want to talk to you, or in other words, to interview you. Think of your resume as a personal advertisement designed to market your skills.

Whether you are answering an ad in the paper or sending resumes to a targeted group of employers, keep in mind that most hiring managers spend 10 to 30 seconds per resume. Some even use scanners to help weed out applicants. Given these two practices, it is extremely important to prepare a resume that will attract favorable attention and make the person reading the resume want to talk with you in more detail about your qualifications.

What makes a resume effective? An effective resume **must** be:

1. *Brief*—Resumes should be not more than one page if possible. Two pages is the absolute maximum. It is very important to sell yourself quickly while addressing your prospective employer's needs.
2. *Informative*—Give your qualifications and an insight into your future career plans, which is known as your career objective, very succinctly. Be specific; describe skills and experience in measurable details using action verbs. Be honest about your skills and experience; highlight only those in which you are best and those that are in demand. Eliminate unnecessary details such as personal characteristics, hobbies and interests. If you need the space, do not list your references; if employers are seriously considering you for a job, they will ask you for them.
3. *Accurate*—Make sure there are no typographical or grammatical errors. Although small, such errors may make the difference in whether your resume gets tossed into the trash can. Resumes should be free of gram-



Resumes should be not more than one page, if possible.

mar and punctuation errors. Do not rely on spell and grammar checkers to prevent errors; get someone to carefully proofread your resume every time you make any changes.

4. **Attractive**—Keep in mind that your resume may be the first impression a potential employer will have about you; therefore, you want to make certain that your resume is easy to read and follow. Use one-inch margin on the top and bottoms and one and one-quarter inch margins on the sides. Use an 11 or 12-point font that is simple and professional looking, and print your resume on non-textured, fine-grained paper in white or ivory. Use special effects, i.e., bold print, italics, and bullets and numbers, sparingly; these can be very effective in guiding the reader's attention; using special effects consistently will help.
5. **Well organized**—Arrange the information in a logical format. Your name, address, degrees, and how to be reached should be centered at the top of the page. Follow this information with your career objective, a record of your accomplishments (sometimes referred to as work history or experience), a synopsis of your qualifications, educational experience, and other relevant information. Your career objective should be a very brief one or two sentence paragraph that tells the type of work you want, where you want to do it, and where you want to go in your career in the long term. Your accomplishments should be listed in reverse chronological order starting with your previous jobs. For each job

give the company name, dates of employment, position held, and three to seven of your most outstanding accomplishments in that position.

Again, use measurable terms. Your qualifications should be stated

in either a list or a short paragraph. Your educational history may fit under other relevant information if you do not have any special experiences, such as volunteer work, travel, special courses or training, that add to your qualification for the job for which you are applying.

The next two issues of *The Workplace* will continue to focus on how to write an effective resume. One will address organizing the resume in more detail, including formatting the resume, and one will focus on how to write an electronic resume.

*Keep in mind that your resume may be the first impression a potential employer will have about you . . .*

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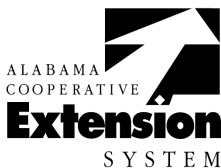
**Alabama Cooperative Extension System**

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